

Return to Use Initiative

2007 Demonstration Projects

River Road Industrial Center (formerly known as FMC Corporation): Fridley, Minnesota

THE SITE: The massive River Road Industrial Center, also more commonly known by its former anchor tenant names at various points in its long history as the FMC Corporation, United Defense, or BAE Facility, is located in Fridley, Minnesota, just north of the City of Minneapolis. Part of this sprawling industrial site includes an 18-acre parcel of land where solvents, paint sludge, and plating wastes were generated and disposed of in an on-site dump from the 1940s to 1969, contaminating both soils and ground water. Contamination migrated to the Mississippi River, which lies only 1,000 feet from the site and serves as the major source of drinking water for the City of Minneapolis. In an effort to address the source of the contamination, soil from the waste disposal areas was excavated and placed in an on-site containment and treatment facility. A ground water containment system has been installed and monitoring of two aquifers is ongoing.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Conveniently located within the city limits of Fridley, the River Road Industrial Center is already linked to public infrastructure and utilities. The property is zoned for industrial use and the owner is actively seeking developers to help transform the site into an asset for the community. Though there are no buyers currently on the horizon, the site's open space presents opportunities for alternative interim uses.

THE BARRIERS: Market conditions and Superfund stigma appear to be the main barriers to the site's redevelopment. With only 18 available acres, the site might be overlooked by developers seeking large tracts of land for facilities that need land for potential for expansion. Due to its potential to impact the Minneapolis drinking water system, the site once held the highest Hazard Ranking System score of all sites on the National Priorities List. This legacy of the site's contamination and cleanup may also be a deterrent to immediate development.

THE SOLUTION: Industrial redevelopment of the site may not occur immediately, but the site owner, ELT Minneapolis LLC, EPA, and a local Academy of Aeronautics (AMA) club recently came to the conclusion that temporary use of the site as a recreational space makes sense.



Barrier:

Superfund stigma and the small size of the site seem to deter potential developers

Solution:

Partnership between EPA and the Academy of Model Aeronautics resulted in beneficial reuse of the site by a local aeromodeling club



Before:

An industrial dump site

After:

Temporary recreational site awaiting industrial redevelopment

Two major recreational areas are located due west of the site, and the flat open space of part of the site is a perfect flying field. Utilizing a partnership established with the AMA in 2005, EPA worked closely with the site owner and the interested AMA club, the Minneapolis Piston Poppers, to ensure that aeromodeling would not affect the remedy's ability to protect human health and the environment. The reuse marks the first ground-up success story of the EPA/AMA partnership since its inception in 2005. The site's current owner feels that the Piston Poppers are providing a valuable community service by flying their control line planes on the site. Until it is developed for industrial purposes, the AMA club most likely will continue to fly at the River Road Industrial Center.

THE SITE NOW: The River Road Industrial Center is currently in temporary recreational use by the Minneapolis Piston Poppers aeromodeling club. In exchange for use of the site, the club provides minor maintenance services such as mowing the grass and keeping the field neat and clean. While the cleaned up site awaits industrial development, the Piston Poppers are serving as responsible stewards of the land and their regular presence is helping to deter trespassing and other inappropriate activities. The club's use of the site is also providing daily proof to neighbors and passersby that the site's Superfund legacy is a thing of the past.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Thomas Smith, Remedial Project Manager, at (312) 886-6540 or smith.thomasl@epa.gov; or Tom Bloom, EPA Region 5 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (312) 886-1967 or bloom.thomas@epa.gov.

